

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A recording medium for storing digital data to be read/updated by a data recording and reproducing device,

the digital data comprising:

a plurality of content data reproducible by the data  
5 recording and reproducing device; and

reproduction control information used to determine the content data to be reproduced, wherein

the reproduction control information includes reproduction sequence information which determines a reproduction order of the  
10 plurality of content data while the data recording and reproducing device performs normal reproduction, and reproduction frequency parameters each of which determines reproduction frequency of the content data while the data recording and reproducing device performs special reproduction, the reproduction frequency  
15 parameters being updatable.

2. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the reproduction frequency parameters are updated according to information relevant to the content data selected at normal reproduction.

3. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the reproduction control information includes information

about date and time while the content data is recorded.

4. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the reproduction control information includes information about date and time while the content data is reproduced last time.

5. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the reproduction control information includes information about the number of times the content data has been reproduced.

6. A data recording and reproducing device for reproducing digital data to be read/updated in the recording medium of claim 1, the device comprising:

a determination part operable to read the reproduction control information from the recording medium, and generate information used to determine which content data is to be reproduced based on one of the reproduction sequence information and the reproduction frequency parameters included in the read reproduction control information;

10 a selection part operable to select which content data is to be reproduced based on the information generated by the determination part; and

a reproduction part operable to read the content data selected by the selection part from the recording medium for reproduction.

7. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 6, wherein

the determination part generates, based on the read reproduction control information, reproduction frequency parameters which indicate a reproduction frequency while the content data is randomly reproduced, and

the selection part randomly selects which content data is to be reproduced in such a manner as to satisfy the reproduction frequency indicated by the reproduction frequency parameters.

8. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 7, wherein

the selection part comprises:

a random number generator generating a random number;

and

a random number table for interrelating the random number with the content data, and is used to determine which content data is to be reproduced.

9. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 6, wherein,

at normal reproduction, the determination part determines a reproduction order of the plurality of content data based on the reproduction sequence information in the read reproduction control information, and

the selection part selects the content data for reproduction in the reproduction order determined by the determination part.

10. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 6, further comprising an update part operable to update the reproduction control information recorded on the recording medium by writing new reproduction control information thereon.

11. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 10, wherein

the update part updates the reproduction control information on the recording medium based on information relevant to the content data selected at normal reproduction.

12. The data recording and reproducing device according to claim 6, wherein

the determination part includes a timer generating time information, and determines a reproduction frequency for each of the content data by using the time information generated by the timer.

13. A reproduction control information collection system in which an information provider collects reproduction control information about a reproduction frequency of a content

reproduced by a user for sale to a content merchandiser, and  
5 rewards the user with a bonus for the reproduction control  
information, the system comprising:

a user's system provided on the user side;

an information provider's system provided on the  
information provider side; and

10 a content merchandiser's system provided on the content  
merchandiser side, wherein

the user's system, the information provider's system, and  
the merchandiser's system are interconnected with one another via  
a network for information exchange,

15 the user's system transmits the user's reproduction control  
information over the network,

the information provider's system receives the user's  
reproduction control information which came from the user's  
system, and transmits, over the network, the information together  
20 with an ID uniquely corresponds to the user to the content  
merchandiser's system,

in response to the reproduction control information and the  
ID provided by the information provider's system, the content  
merchandiser's system issues a password uniquely corresponds to  
25 the ID, and transmits the password to the information provider's  
system over the network,

the information provider's system transmits the password  
and the ID provided by the content merchandiser's system to the

user's system over the network,

30           the user's system presents the ID and the password provided  
by the information provider's system to the content  
merchandiser's system over the network, and asks for the bonus,  
and

          the content merchandiser's system identifies the user with  
35   the presented ID and password, and provides the bonus to the  
identified user.

14.   The reproduction control information collection  
system according to claim 13, wherein

the user's system comprises:

          a communications part operable to communicate with  
5   the information provider's system and the content merchandiser's  
system via the network; and

          a reproduction control information management part  
operable to manage the user's reproduction control information  
for transmission to the information provider's system via the  
10   communications part with a predetermined timing,

the information provider's system comprises:

          a communications part operable to communicate with  
the user's system and the content merchandiser's system via the  
network;

15           a user's information management part operable to  
manage information about the user in addition to the ID; and

a reproduction control information database for interrelating the reproduction control information, the ID, and any corresponding content with one another for storage, and

20 the content merchandiser's system comprises:

a communications part operable to communicate with the information provider's system and the user's system via the network;

25 a bonus offer part operable to provide the bonus to the user's system via the communications part; and

a password management part operable to issue and manage the password, and authenticating a correspondence between the ID and the password presented by the user's system.